

Article appeared
on page A-6

THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
7 December 1978

U.S. Taking No Special Steps to Protect Secrets of Arms Now in Iran

By Vernon A. Guidry Jr.

Washington Star Staff Writer

The Defense Department says no extraordinary steps have been taken to protect U.S. military secrets that had been sold to Iran in the course of its military buildup.

"We will keep reviewing with them their responsibilities and precautions," said a spokesman.

The Moslem holy days this month are believed crucial for the embattled shah of Iran. Uncertainty about the future of his government has revived concerns about what might result if sophisticated American-made weapons fell into unfriendly or unstable hands.

The question of compromising U.S. military secrets was most sharply debated a year ago when Congress reluctantly acquiesced to a \$1.3 billion deal to sell a complicated airborne radar and computer system (called AWACS) designed to help control air battles.

THAT SYSTEM, plus brand-new F-16 fighter planes and new Navy destroyers were not scheduled for delivery until the 1980s so their technology is not directly at risk.

But the Iranians have a good deal of sophisticated American weaponry, including 80 F-14s, the U.S. Navy's first-line fleet defense fighter made by the Grumman Corp. This fighter has highly secret black-box electronics aboard, including a computer and radar system that can track multiple

targets at great distance and attack them with the Phoenix missiles carried on the fighter.

At the time of the AWACS controversy, CIA Director Stansfield Turner did not seem to have much confidence about Iran's security in the best of times.

IN A CLASSIFIED document circulated on Capitol Hill Turner said, "The shah is a proponent of the divide-and-rule principle. There is little cooperation among the intelligence and security services, and jurisdictional rivalries are a way of life."

Turner went on to say that, while U.S. observers believed security was tight in Iran, "it would appear prudent to recognize that the risk of Soviet penetration exists along with a consequence risk of compromise for information and equipment provided."

One source familiar with conditions in Iran said the unrest in the cities has not penetrated military bases where the armed forces remain loyal to the shah. The F-14s and associated equipment are maintained on double-guarded bases, said a source.

Grumman has about 450 employees in Iran who have with them nearly 500 dependents. The company has not joined other firms such as General Electric and Westinghouse in ordering their employees evacuated from the country.